



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE
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CHICAGO, IL 60604

NEWS RELEASE

Woman Charged for Smuggling Illegal Aliens from Mexico to Chicago to Work in Taverns

Smuggling operation run by United States citizen Paula Arguello involved bringing aliens from Mexico who were forced to work in Arguello's taverns and live in apartments above the businesses until smuggling debts were paid off.

CHICAGO, IL. – January 23, 2003. Brian R. Perryman, Chicago District Director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), along with Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, announced a seven count indictment returned on January 21, 2003, against **Ms. Paula Arguello**, age 73, for operating a smuggling scheme to bring illegal aliens from Mexico to work in her two taverns, "La Rueda" at 4157 S. Kedzie and "La Corona" at 1722 S. Loomis.

The aliens were housed in apartments located above the two taverns and were employed at the taverns. As part of the scheme, money was deducted from the workers' wages by **Arguello** to pay for rent and to go toward paying off the smuggling fees that **Arguello** had paid to smugglers to transport the illegal aliens to Chicago.

This investigation by Chicago INS agents into the smuggling activities of **Arguello** was known as "Operation Wagon Wheel." In addition to the criminal charges, the U.S. government is seeking to forfeit both taverns. **Arguello** had her initial appearance before U.S. District Court Judge David Coar on January 23, 2003.

"Human smuggling is an unscrupulous and dirty business, and those who profit from it are violating our nation's laws and exploiting the most vulnerable of people," said INS District Director Brian Perryman.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the United States has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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